

D/DFA NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2018

The following is a fictionalized story about the life of Elizabeth Waldman and her husband John Dreisbach and some of their children. Based on known facts, it also takes literary license. An abbreviated version was presented as a one person play at the 2010 D/DFA Reunion held at St. Peter's Tohickon United Church of Christ in Perkasie, PA. St. Peter's has particular significance for descendants of Simon Dreisbach Sr. In 1756 Simon Dreisbach Sr and all his family became refugees as they fled from the Indian attacks in Northampton County. They found safety and new homes in the area served by this church. From church records we know that Simon Sr's youngest son, John, was married to Elizabeth Waldman here and that some of Simon Sr's grandchildren were born and baptized here. In the early 1760's, the threat of Indian attacks diminished and John and Elizabeth and other Dreisbach families returned to their lands in Northampton County.

Elizabeth Waldman Dreisbach's Story

The following was a play in which the spirit of Elizabeth Waldman Dreisbach is speaking to the people attending the 2010 D/DFA reunion in St. Peter's Tohickon Church

"Well - this is a surprise! I've been dead for a long timeⁱ but we souls often return to places that were important to us in life. I'm not really here, you know, I'm just a collection of thoughts and memories that linger in this spot. What's unusual is not that I can visit places I loved in life, but that I can interact with your present and my future!

It's always good to come back to St. Peter's Tohickon Church and stand pretty close to the same place I stood when John and I were married in 1758.ⁱ I wish Johnⁱⁱ was here to talk with you, but it looks like you'll have to make do with me and my memories. Just look at this lovely stone church. It was built after John and I moved north to Northampton County when the Indian attacks were mostly over. The church we were married in was a lot smaller,



St. Peter's Tohickon United Church of Christ, Perkasie, PA. was officially founded in 1745 but the congregation met as early as 1738 and built a log church in 1745. The present church was built in 1838 and remodeled in 1884.
Photo by Jack Dreisbach, 2010.

ⁱ Elizabeth Waldman, b. 25 Jul 1742, d. 14 Dec 1821. Buried Zion Stone Church, Kreidersville, PA, m. 14 Nov 1758.

ⁱⁱ Johannes Dreisbach, b. 2 Feb. 1735 in Oberndorf, Wittgenstein. Immigrated with his family in 1743, d. 27 Sep 1796. Buried Zion Stone Church cemetery, Kreidersville, PA.

built of logs and had a dirt floor. And now look - the church has beautiful polished floors and big windows with glass panes to bring in lots of light.²

Things certainly are different now than they were when I lived here. There are way more people and way more houses; there is this beautiful church building, school houses, new roads and - it's even a new country! I've seen a lot and I remember a lot but then again you mustn't always trust my memory. I have clear recollections of some things that happened, and no memory at all of other events. And then there are the events I WISH had happened and which sometimes I now remember has having happened. So you'll have to sort out for yourself what's true and what's just a memory in an old lady's head!

I was born not far from here, on a hot afternoon in July of our Lord 1747. I grew up just down the road and over a little... my father, Conrad Waldmanⁱⁱⁱ and my mother, Katherine Bierly^{iv}, worked hard... and so did my brothers and my sisters^v. We lived pretty much like most other folks, in a log cabin. For a while we had a dirt floor but later we had split logs with the flat side up. There were two little windows – just a square holes cut by taking out lengths from logs in the wall. Mostly the window was empty – except for the flies and wasps and mosquitoes that flew in and out. In winter we stretched oiled paper over it, or if the wind was strong or it was really cold we put up a deer hide. The windows were so small you had to leave the door open if you wanted enough light to see. Of course we usually left the door open for air, anyway - the fireplace smoked something fierce.



Log cabin (ca. 1790) exterior is covered with vertical boards. Unlike very early cabins, it has a stone fireplace. The brick chimney is a later addition. Located on what was the property of Jost Dreisbach, Lehigh Twp., Northampton Co., PA. Photo by M. Falconer 2016

I passed my growing up years pretty much like every other young girl – carrying buckets and jugs water from the stream to the house, stirring the venison stew in the metal pot over the fire and watching over the smaller ones. As I grew up my twin sisters, Margaret and Katherine,^{vi} and I were put in charge of the vegetable garden. When we tried to get

ⁱⁱⁱ Conrad Waldman, b. ca. 1715 in Europe, immigrated 1738, d. ca. 1796. There is nothing to substantiate that Conrad was the descendant of a countess as LaMance suggested. He was illiterate and there is only one official record of him. His place of birth, date of birth and date of death are all unknown. Although there is a grave marker for him in Zion Stone Church cemetery, the official records of burials at this church do not include Conrad Wald(t)man.

^{iv} Maria Katherine Bierly, b. 1708 in Germany, d. 25 Mar 1786. Buried Zion Stone Church cemetery, Kreidersville, PA.

^v The list of Conrad and Katherine's children is not known for certain. They had somewhere between 8 and 14 children.

^{vi} Born ca. 1738.

our brothers, Peter and Frederick^{vii}, to help us weed, they always told us they had to chase our cow who'd gotten into the woods, or they had to build snares to catch rabbits. Sometimes they even said they "had" to fish – as if that was a chore, sitting on the banks of the Tohickon with one of them holding a pole while the other explored for crayfish and turtles.



Interior of an early log cabin with sleeping loft, small window, three legged stools, board table and fireplace of mud-plastered logs. Photographer - unknown.

There were 11 of us living in our one room log house; our oldest brother and sister were already married and had their own places. The five boys slept upstairs in the loft. The four girls shared beds along the wall. Our mattresses were stuffed with grass. They smelled so sweet when we put new grass inside the ticking but by the middle of winter the fleas and lice and bedbugs had pretty well taken over. We learned to ignore the bites. We sat on 3 legged wooden stools and to save space, the table was just a shelf nailed to the wall.

At one end of our log cabin was a fireplace made of sticks and stones and plastered with about 4 inches of mud. Twice in my lifetime the chimney caught fire and the cabin burned down. Both times we managed to save most of the food, as well as some clothing and bedding. The boys bedding, up in the loft, was lost though. Both times were in the dead of winter when we had a fire going day and night to keep us warm and both times we were taken in by neighbors, a few of us to each house. When spring came, we built a new cabin. My mother always wanted a stone house with a stone fireplace but they were much too costly for us.

Things were pretty much the same from year to year. Until 1755. I was 13 years old and I remember that Sunday in early December. We gathered in the old log church. Rev. Riess³ led the service. Reverend Hecker didn't arrive until that spring. There had been rumours floating around - something about Indians, but nobody seemed to know much more than that. There were many more people than usual in the church probably because there were two strangers. We started with our usual service but everyone seemed agitated. Even the adults were whispering among themselves. The strangers sat in silence on the bench at the front.

^{vii} Peter Waldman 1741-1817, m. Elizabeth Boyer 1751-1831, both buried Zion Stone Church cemetery, Kreidersville, PA. and Frederick Waldman (b. after 1742, d. before 1785). May have died in the Revolutionary War.

After the service ended, Rev. Riess introduced the two strangers and one of them stood up and started speaking. He talked about how up in Northampton people had been fearing an Indian attack for months and there had been plenty of rumors that the Indians were preparing for war. "Then, on Monday night, November twenty fourth", he said, "the Indians attacked the Moravian Mission at Gnadenheutten, on the other side of the great valley to the north of us. They came on without warning and killed 16 men and women⁴ and then the war party moved on." he said. "That night, the sky was lit by the flames of burning houses and barns and the red glow was visible all the way to Bethlehem. " The man reported that the next day news of the massacre was carried throughout the Lehigh Valley and everyone was advised to flee their homes. Some people reported seeing other groups of Indians in the vicinity. Within days, the town of Bethlehem was full to bursting with refugee families.



View of the Moravian town of Bethlehem, PA in 1757. The buildings were largely of stone and brick and thus provided secure refuge from Indians. By Robert Sayer, printed in Bethlehem, PA in 1757. Moravian Archives, 41 West Locust St., Bethlehem, PA.

The two strangers who sat in the front of our church had come from Bethlehem and were asking people to accept refugees. Bethlehem was too crowded and it too, was threatened with Indian attack. Nobody knew how long it would be until it was safe for the people to go back home. After Christmas the first refugees fleeing the Indian attacks appeared in Tohickon. Some came on foot carrying burlap sacks with all their possessions inside. A

few came with carts and horses, carrying pots and tools and a few pieces of furniture. They were welcomed into our houses – which were already crowded - but somehow everyone made room for still more people. At least the harvest had been good, so we had enough food to share. It didn't take long until everyone got together to build log cabins for the refugees – for surely nobody could live for very long being as crowded as we were.

All that winter and into spring and even into summer, refugees kept arriving. The Indian attacks to the north of us continued too, and many of those who first refused to flee were attacked. Some were killed, almost all had their houses and barns burned. We were scared the Indians would come down to Tohickon and there was talk about sending out scouting parties to see if Indians were in the neighborhood.

I remember that among those families who fled their homes and made their way down here there was a whole bunch of Dreisbach families. There was John's father, old Mr. Simon Dreisbach, and John's mother, Katarina. With them was John's only sister, Anna Katarina, who was 18 years old, a bit shy, very pretty, and newly married to Henry Ulrich.⁵ And of course there was their handsome son, John, who was 21 years old.

John's oldest brother, Jost Dreisbach, the miller, and his wife Elizabeth^{viii} and their 3 little girls also came down here as did John's other older brother, Adam and his wife Susanna^{ix} and their three children. Poor Susanna, she was heavily pregnant when they fled and she had to take care of their 1 1/2 year old little boy, Yost, and two girls, Salome and Magdalena, who were just 7 and 4. Adam brought his wagon and team but I think riding in that bouncing wagon must have been almost worse for Susanna than walking here would have been.

Jost didn't stay down here very long. After Elizabeth and the little girls moved into the log cabin that Jost built for them he went back up north. Elizabeth pleaded with her husband to stay but Jost was determined that his grist mill should not be burned by the Indians and went back as soon as his family was settled. He did come to visit when he could and each time he took back food for himself and his horses and the few others who remained in Lehigh Township since nobody up there dared to work the fields during that summer of 1756.

I saw the Dreisbach families at church services and harvest time and whenever the community gathered. I'm not sure when I first started to notice John. I remember thinking he was handsome but he wasn't at all interested in me. I do remember that

^{viii} Jost's wife was almost certainly Elizabeth Dieter, daughter of Jost's neighbor in Lehigh Township.

^{ix} Susanna Coerber, b. 7 April 1724, m. 16 Jul 1749 Trinity Luth Ch, Lancaster, PA. d. 7 Apr 1805. Both she and Adam are buried in First Ref. Church cemetery in Easton, PA. The Easton Public Library is now built on this cemetery. A map in the library shows where the graves are. Adam's and Susanna's graves lie under the street in front of the library.

sometimes I would carry lunch or jugs of cider and beer out to the men working in the fields. I would stand there, watching John, shirt off, showing his muscular arms as he worked to cut the wheat. Once in a while I could tell he caught sight of me standing at the edge of the field and he would smile, but mostly he ignored me in favor of the older girls who, like me, had brought lunch for the men.

I remember how things changed on my 16th birthday. In July, 1758 John came a courting. We didn't make much fuss about birthdays then, but somebody must have told John that I had just turned 16 – and was now officially eligible for courting and marrying. He came round to our log cabin after supper. We were all sitting outside, trying to stay cool in the heat of July. He looked so funny walking toward us with one hand behind his back, his face all serious.



He walked straight up to me, bowed and said – “Miss Elizabeth, will you allow me to wish you the blessing of the Lord on this, the 16th anniversary of your birth?” With that, he brought out the hand he had kept behind his back and presented me with a bouquet of wild flowers. I was so surprised I didn't know what to do. I think I said “Thank you” but even now, when I think back on this event, I am flustered. It was just that I had admired John for so long – and always thought he never noticed me – and then, all of a sudden, there he was, bowing and handing me flowers! He didn't stay long – my brothers came from the barn just in time to see John hand the flowers to me and were rolling around on the ground, laughing and making rude sounds. As John left, he boxed Peter, who was 15 at that time, in the ears. Of course the boys spent the next few days bowing to me and pretending to whip out flowers from behind their backs – but I didn't care.

After that John came by our house whenever he could. He helped my father repair the fences and he brought fresh eggs to my mother. For me he had the biggest of smiles.

It was early fall when John caught me around the waist as I chased the chickens behind the barn. The next thing I knew, we were inside the barn and he was kissing me and ... We were married two months later, on the 14th of November 1758, right here in St Peter's Church by Reverend Hecker.⁶ My parents were there for the wedding, along with my brothers and sisters and John's parents. John was 22 years old and I was 16.

In fact it was a doubly special day. Our friends Valentine and Margaret Marsch baptized their little baby just before we got married. And they named the baby after John!⁷ We

had a fine party to celebrate the occasions, the Baughmans came, and the whole Marsch family of course and everyone brought food and whiskey to share.

Even before we were officially married John had built us a small log cabin and gave me the promise of a bigger one soon. In a short time we also had a barn, a calf that would grow and give milk come spring, a wild pig that John had caught in the woods when it was a baby, some chickens and a cat. By early spring we knew a baby was on the way. We asked John's older brother, Adam, and his wife Susanna to be sponsors for our baby at the Christening.

John Adam was born mid-day on September 29th, 1759⁸. First babies are always hard to deliver and this was no different but both the baby and I made it through without harm thanks to my mother who was very experienced in birthing. Adam and Susanna stood for him as sponsors at his baptism a week later. We were so proud, and John Adam was such a good baby. At first he did very well, but November was cold and rainy. Our little log cabin couldn't be kept warm and he took a cold. I did everything I knew to make him better, but nothing helped. I took him to my bed to keep him warm and to tell him how much I loved him, but he stopped nursing and soon he died. We buried him before the first snow fell. That was a long, hard winter.

Nearly a year later, in early fall of 1760, most of the other refugees had gone back to their own homes or were planning to leave as soon as they got the crops harvested. John's brother, Jost, had already moved his family back up to their house near his mill in Lehigh Township. John's sister, Catherine, and her husband Henry Ulrich, had gone up to Northampton already in 1759 and took up land near Jost's property. Even John's parents had gone back to their farm near Blue Mountain. John had stayed here mostly because he didn't own any land in Northampton County but also because we were saving money to buy our own property. Land here in Tohickon was very expensive, in Lehigh Township where John's family lived, it was less expensive but still beyond our means, but John's brothers, especially Jost and Adam, said they would help us settle and see what we could work out to buy our own land.

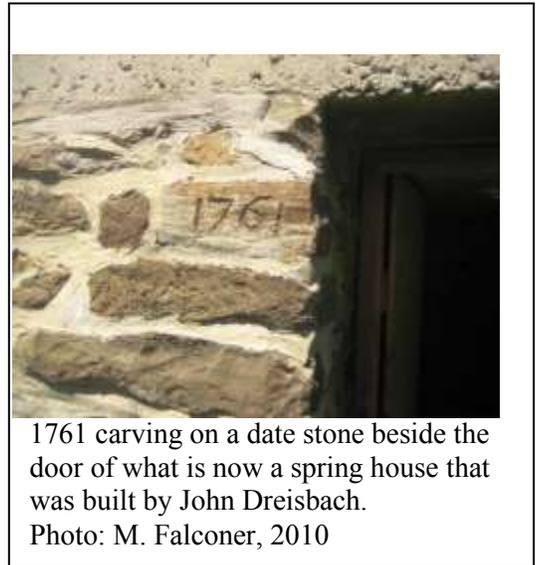
John's father, Simon, had warranted a triangular piece of land that bordered on the land now owned by Jost and Adam. However Simon moved to new land to the east and this tract had to be kept in the Dreisbach family. This is all complicated, but trust me, it was necessary that a Dreisbach own this piece of unpromising land and since we needed land, that person would be my John. Fortunately, adjoining this piece of useless hillside was a tract of good land with a stream. There was one problem, we couldn't buy it because it was part of the Indian Tract. This was a huge chunk of land owned by the Penn family and ostensibly was to resettle Indians who had been displaced. Actually, no Indians were ever settled there and the Penns hung onto the land until settlement

pressure made it appreciate significantly in value. There had been people squatting on this land but when the Indian raids started, they fled just like everybody else. And since there still was some threat of Indian attack, not many people had returned. The Dreisbach brothers, Jost and Adam, had been "protecting" the upper corner of the Indian Tract, waiting until they could put a legal warrant on it and get title to it.

So it was that when John and I returned to Lehigh Township, it was perfect for us to settle on this piece of land in the Indian Tract. This would remove the threat of a stranger squatting on it and it would mean that we were close enough to Jost and Adam to help them when needed and to get help from them when we needed it.

Once we got to this land, John built us a house. We were still worried about Indian attacks, so John built the bottom floor out of stone and what's more, he built it right over a small spring! That way we would always have access to water. The upper floor, where we lived, was made of logs. He even carved the year he built the house into a stone right next to the door! Later he built us a larger stone house with a central chimney and two big fireplaces!⁹

Indian Creek ran along the western boundary of our property – and the Baughman family – good friends of the Dreisbach family – lived on the land just across the creek from us. My John didn't actually get title to this land until 1792 – but everybody knew it was ours.



1761 carving on a date stone beside the door of what is now a spring house that was built by John Dreisbach.
Photo: M. Falconer, 2010

But I get ahead of myself. After moving into our log cabin beside Indian Creek, we settled into our new life and I became pregnant again. You can just imagine with what joy - and with what trepidation - we greeted the birth of our little Henry^x on the 30th of October, 1762. Henry was a healthy baby – and a feisty one. Right from the beginning he knew what he wanted and what he didn't want. When his brother, Jost, was born a year and a half later, Henry did not like giving up his place as the baby. We had 5 more children after Jost – but Henry always had the pride of first place and considered himself the first born.

Ah Henry... he was always a difficult child – and in many ways he grew up to be a difficult adult. He is, of course, my son – so perhaps I look at him with the glow of

^x Henry Dreisbach, b. 30 Oct 1762, d. 22 Feb 1841 in Sparta, NY. m. on 30 Mar 1784 to Maria Catherine App b. 1763, d. 29 Nov 1837 in Sparta, NY. Both buried at Greenmount Cemetery, Dansville, Livingston Co., NY.

motherhood – but there are some things he has done in his life and with his life that I cannot approve of.

Up there in Northampton County, we went to the church that Simon Dreisbach Sr and his oldest son, Jost, had started and which was built right at the western edge of Jost's land. It was just a little log church – and in winter it was sometimes too cold to use it for services. Our congregation wasn't big enough to afford our own preacher. Mostly we conducted our own services and maybe one of the Dreisbach men or the Dieter men would read from the Bible. It was the best we could do – but oh how wonderful it was when the circuit preacher came through. We had real sermons and all the babies born since his last visit were baptized, and all the couples who'd gotten together had real marriages performed.

For a number of years the church was served by Reverend Egedius Hecker, the same reverend who preached here in Tohickon. He made the long ride on horseback up to our church, stopping along the way at other small congregations to bring them the Word of God. It was Reverend Hecker who baptized our little Henry up there in Jost's church.

When he came to hold services at the log church called, Reverend Hecker always stayed with John's brother, Jost, and the two of them got along famously. Jost knew the good Reverend was not opposed to an evening of stories and whiskey. So the Reverend, Jost and his brother Adam, and some of the other local men would gather at Jost's mill where they sat on benches and shared news of events and traded stories. Sometimes John and his brother, George, were there – but mostly it was the older men who sat and smoked their pipes, drank whiskey and pumped the good Reverend for news.

On the eleventh of April, 1764, our son Jost^{xi} was born. Unlike his older brother, Jost was always willing to help. Then, three years later, our Catherine^{xii} was born and oh she was sweet and so cute. I was devastated when she died. She was only 6 years old.

Oh the children were my delight, and my salvation from sadness. Peter^{xiii} was born in 1768 and John^{xiv} in 1771. Then Susanna^{xv} came in 1774, then John George^{xvi} in 1778

^{xi} Jost Dreisbach, b. 11 Apr 1764, d. 18 Mar 1854, buried Bunker Hill cemetery, Weissport, PA. m. in 1792 Big Creek Church to Anna Margaretha Solt (b. Aug 1764, d. 16 Apr 1846, buried Bunker Hill cemetery, Weissport, PA.

^{xii} Catherine Dreisbach, b. 1767, d. 1773 age 6 yr, 3 month, 14 days.

^{xiii} Peter Dreisbach, b. 28 Mar 1768, d. 17 Aug 1851, buried Zion Stone Church cemetery, m. 1793 to Anna Bier (b. 1769, d. 1854).

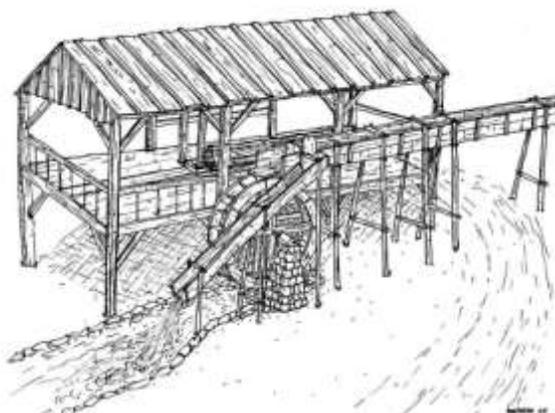
^{xiv} John Dreisbach Jr, b. 25 Dec 1771, d. 25 Sep 1809. Buried Zion Stone Church cemetery, Kreidersville, PA.

^{xv} Susanna Dreisbach, b. 20 Feb 1774, d. ?, m. 13 Apr 1784 to Paul Solt, b. 20 Oct 1768, d. Nov 1833, Buried East Penn, PA.

^{xvi} John George Dreisbach, b. 8 Oct 1778, d. 28 July 1789. Buried Zion Stone Church cemetery, Kreidersville, PA.

and finally Conrad^{xvii} in 1781. There was another great sadness when our boy John George died at age 11 and I think my John never really recovered from losing his son.

Henry was a handful in his teens. John's brother, George, suggested that we might want to send Henry to work with him. George had a saw mill, and was a carpenter as well. He promised to teach Henry a trade. The two of them were a little bit alike – both had a wild side that wasn't easy to tame – and both could be hard to live with although they seemed to get along with each other alright. Maybe it was the difference in ages - Henry was 16 and George was 45 when we sent Henry to work with him.



Early saw mill which may be similar to the kind that George Dreisbach had. Source: <http://chroniclesofarn.wikia.com/wiki/Category: Holding/Ironstar>

George was always a wandering man – never could put down roots like his brothers. It was natural that he took up being a millwright, traveling across the country to build and repair the machinery in grist mills and saw mills. Working with wood was second nature to him. He could take a log and turn it into a round gear for a mill as easy as I can make a dress for myself. He taught Henry how to make and repair the wooden machinery in mills, taking Henry along when he went far away to fix grist mills. Eventually Henry, too, became a millwright. That came in handy when Henry had a big family. He could do mill repair in the late fall and winter, the times between

harvest and sowing.

I met the App Family sometime around 1772 when they took over the property in the Indian Tract a bit to the south of us. They came just about the same time that we built the stone church in Kreidersville. Michael App and his wife, Elizabeth used to live across the Lehigh River – over in Allemangel, that bit of wooded and poor land up near Blue Mountain. So it's no wonder they took the opportunity to squat on land in the Indian Tract, just like John and me. The Apps were a bit older than us and had two almost grown sons, Frederick and Michael, and they had a daughter a few years older than my Henry. They also had a daughter, Catharina, who was 1 year younger than my Henry.

Then came the war years. John's brother Simon Jr associated mostly with men from Easton and Bucks County and Philadelphia. On occasion we heard him say that it was

^{xvii} Conrad Dreisbach, b. 11 Aug 1781, d. 13 Dec 1846, Buried Zion Stone Church cemetery, Kreidersville, PA. m. Elizabeth Fenstermacher b. 14 Mar 1792, d. 9 Feb. 1878. Buried Zion Stone Church, cemetery, Kreidersville, PA.

time for Pennsylvania to stand on its own and not be beholden to England which was too far away to understand the circumstances here. Jost and Simon Jr were almost as upset with the Quaker government in Philadelphia which catered to the wealthy Englishmen of Bucks County and seemed to care not a whit for us Germans up here in Northampton County. Already in 1775 Jost was elected to the Committee of Safety where he was quite willing to see that everyone observed the boycott of British goods.

It was the Committee of Safety that, in 1775, demanded that every man between the ages of 18 and 53 sign up for the militia. Jost and Simon Jr were among the first to sign on – but their brother Adam, who was exactly 53, didn't feel the need to join the militia, even though Jost, who was older than Adam, was chosen to be Captain of the 70 militia men from Lehigh Township and then chosen to be the Colonel of the Third Battalion.

Simon Jr also served on the Council of Safety and spent a long time in the summer of 1776 drawing up the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He even got elected as a Representative, along with a lot of other prominent men. Simon Jr was nice enough, but he always thought that the rest of his family was a bit backward and uneducated – and I guess, he was right.

My Henry was only 13 when the local Militia was formed – but he wanted to march with the men when they went out for training once a month or so. His uncle, Jost, flatly refused to let Henry take part in the Militia – the training part was alright, he said, but the training always ended in Kryder's tavern where the men drank until they were too drunk to walk home and Jost realized that I would be very angry if my 13 year old son was among them. My John was in the militia¹⁰ though... and after training, when he came back as the birds were starting to sing, I knew he would lie down in the barn and spend the rest of the day asleep. That meant more work for the children and me, but it was better all around if John slept it off.

The war didn't ever come to the Dreisbachs in the form of husbands or sons who were killed. Adam's son, Jost, who spent most of his young manhood in the army, was captured and imprisoned on Long Island and even served in South Carolina at the Battle of Cowpens, but he did come home.

As Henry grew up, he traveled quite a bit, usually with his uncle George, to fix mills. But when he came home he went straight down to the Apps. It was pretty clear that Henry was sweet on Catherine and she was sweet on him. The problem was that they had no money and no land. Eventually they got married anyway. They married in the Kreidersville Church on the 30th of March 1784. Henry was 22 and Catherine was 21. A year later, in 1785, my John finally got title to his first piece of land – the "triangle". It lay north of where we were living and was bordered by the lands of Jost and Adam. A

year after that, John and his friend, Conrad Kryder, bought some land on speculation. Everyone was doing this and Conrad convinced John to spend the money we'd saved to buy a piece of wood lot. I was not happy about this.

Meanwhile Henry and his new wife, Catherine, lived with her parents, the Apps. Henry worked hard clearing the land. Spring, summer and autumn there was the smell of burning wood as the heaps of trees that had been felled on the land were burned. Some trees were taken by skids to the tannery just up Indian Creek that was run by the sons of John's brother, Simon Jr.¹¹

The couple's first baby, Peter - my first grandson - was born in 1788. A year later there was Elizabeth and then Henry. Anna Marie came a year after that, then Joseph, Michael, Jonathan, Regina and Catherine. In 1795, Henry's in-laws, Michael and Elizabeth App, sold their land to Henry.

Then, on the 27th of September in 1796 my John died. He was only 61 years old. He died without a will because his death was so sudden. I was lucky that our youngest son, Conrad, was there to run our farm and I stayed there with my son Conrad and his wife, Elizabeth Fenstermacher and their little daughter, Louisa, for a few years.

In 1800 my son Henry got a job making some machinery for a mill in Whitehall Township, across the Lehigh River. It wasn't unusual for Henry to travel fairly far on his mill work - especially in fall and winter after the harvest was done. So just after Christmas, he said good-bye to his wife, Catherine and their kids and went across the river. He said he'd be back before it was time for spring farm work. And he was. Life was pretty normal until that time Henry got a visitor from across the river sometime in fall and after that, he was a bit - well - preoccupied.

Then - in December, a well-dressed man came asking for Henry. We sent him down the road to their house. That night Henry came up to talk to me. Seems he got a young woman with child, over there in Whitehall Township and her father had brought a court case against him. Henry had been told to appear before the court on the 14th of January.¹²

Henry went to Easton - and his poor wife, Catherine, had to deal with the shame her husband had brought upon the family by fathering a child on another woman. What's worse is that this other woman, Eve Henry, is her name, decided to call the child after his father - so the illegitimate baby was named "Henry Dreisbach". And worse than that, Eve decided not to keep and raise the baby, but had the little boy brought here to be raised. Now what was I to do? I was 60 years old and a widow - my house was no place to raise a youngster. Little Henry went to live with my son, Peter and his wife, Anna Bier. They had no children of their own and were happy to have the little one.

Then, in 1806, my son Henry decided that the future lay in western New York state, where land for purchase was opening up. The land was good, the prices were reasonable, and Henry and Catherine could start over again in a place where nobody knew about the illegitimate son back home in Pennsylvania.

I think it must have been hard for my grandson, little Henry, growing up without a mother and a father. Little Henry was always a quiet sort of boy. He was apprenticed to a shoemaker when he was 12 and by the time he was full grown, he was already making the rounds of the farms, fixing shoes and making new boots. I was happy when he met Elizabeth Solt – she's from a good family up the way, on the other side of Blue Mountain. They just got married this past March, on the 6th (1821). I hope Elizabeth can make him happier.

But I've taken up more than enough of your time. I think I'll go now. Thank you for having the patience to share an old lady's memories. It was a pleasure being able to talk with you and reminisce. Bye." And with that she was gone leaving only the memory of her voice and her stories.

¹ Hinke, William J. Rev., *A History of the Tohickon Union Church, Bedminster Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, with copy of church records Reformed Congregation 1745-1869, Lutheran Congregation 1749-1840*. Prepared and translated at the request of The Pennsylvania German Society. Meadville, PA. 1925. p. 214.

² Davis, W.W.H. *The History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, Chapter XIX, Historical Churches, 1710-1744*. From *The Discovery of the Delaware to the Present Time*. 1876 and 1905 editions. Contributed for use in the USGenWeb Archives by Donna Bluemink.

³ Hinke, W..J. Op. Cit. p. 14.

⁴ <http://culturedcarboncounty.blogspot.com/2013/04/lehigh-ton-students-investigate-moravian.html> A group of students investigated Gnadenhutzen massacre and their results were validated by an expert on the subject, Harrison Hoppes, PhD.

⁵ Hinke, W.J. Op. Cit. p. 213. She was married on 29 Oct. 1755 by Rev. Hecker.

⁶ Ibid. p. 214.

⁷ Ibid. p. 96.

⁸ Ibid. p. 103.

⁹ Direct House Tax 1798, Lehigh Township, Northampton Co, PA.

¹⁰ PA Archives, Series 5, Vol. VIII, pp. 309-310.

¹¹ Allen Twp. taxes, Northampton County Archives, 999 Conroy Place, Forks Twp. PA.

¹² Criminal files #4-M 1797-1804, Files #111 Folders 2 and 3. Northampton County Archives, PA.